

## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



# Marketing Activities

ISSUED MONTHLY BY

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

July 1939

Vol. 1, No. 1

## Now a Monthly

Marketing Activities, started in March 1921 as a weekly, is being inaugurated this month as a monthly publication of the Agricultural Marketing Service. In addition to serving as a medium for the exchange of marketing information between the Federal and State specialists, the "new" publication will carry signed articles of a general and analytical nature dealing with the various phases of marketing -- standardization, inspection, packing, grading, labeling, market reporting, agricultural statistics, etc.

U S DEPT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS LIBRARY  
4-K WASHINGTON D C

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE  
COVERS A BROAD FIELD OF ACTIVITIES

. . . . . By C. W. Kitchen

During the coming year thousands of farmers, shippers, dealers, and consumers will have daily contact with the Agricultural Marketing Service. Thousands more will use its services once or a hundred times in this period.

Many of these folks will not realize that they are dealing with a new organization in the U. S. Department of Agriculture. For considerable confusion always prevails, temporarily at least, when services rendered by one agency are transferred to another.

July 1 marked the final step in the establishment of the Agricultural Marketing Service. As contemplated in the departmental reorganization program announced last October 6 the new Bureau was set up to handle closely related marketing activities formerly in four other Bureaus of the Department. Since October these activities have been conducted under the names of the Bureaus to which the appropriations were previously made.

From the Bureau of Agricultural Economics it was assigned market research, service and regulatory work in connection with cotton, dairy, and poultry products, fruits and vegetables, grain, livestock, meats and



wool, hay, feed and seed, tobacco, warehousing, market news, and crop and livestock estimates. From the Bureau of Animal Industry it was assigned administration of the Packers & Stockyards Act; from the Bureau of Plant Industry, administration of the Federal Seed Act; and from the Bureau of Dairy Industry, administration of the Dairy Exports Act.

The Agricultural Marketing Service covers a broad field of activities. Its functions may be grouped as follows:

(1) The collection and dissemination of crop, livestock, and other agricultural statistics; (2) the gathering and reporting of current market information from terminal markets, shipping points, and producing sections; (3) standardization and inspection to provide a common language in merchandising and a uniform system for measuring gradations in quality of farm and food products; (4) research and demonstration in standardization, grading, preparation for market, handling, and other related phases of marketing; and (5) the administration of "rules of fair play" in the merchandising of certain farm commodities. The administration of 17 specific laws is involved.

These services are not new. Most of the work dates back 20 years or more. Federal crop and livestock reporting celebrated its 75th birthday in 1938. So the service is new in name only. It was not created to handle new work. Closely related activities in the field of marketing merely have been brought together under one service agency for more convenient administration by the Department. To give the most complete and thorough service much of the work will continue to be handled through cooperative agreements with State Departments of Agriculture and State Agricultural Colleges. Some 250 of these agreements are now in effect.

The AMS staff of approximately 2,700 -- of which more than 2,000 are located in the field -- will make every effort to maintain the reputation of service that has been built up over a long period of years.

(Mr. Kitchen is Chief of the Agricultural Marketing Service. Formerly Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, he has been identified with the Department's marketing research, service, and regulatory work for nearly 25 years. Assistant Chief of the AMS is Harry E. Reed, whose background includes livestock investigational work in the Middle Western States and 8 years of Service with BAE.)

-oOo-

#### OATS SMUT ABUNDANT IN IOWA TEST PLOTS

Observations and counts in oat variety test plots at Iowa State College show that the percentage of smut in oats is far above normal this season. A survey is now being made to determine the extent of smut infection in the State. According to the College, smut -- a factor which results in considerable loss of yield -- is easily controlled by seed treatment.

565981

## CAREFUL HARVESTING PRESERVES

## "MALTING" CLASS FOR BARLEY

Agricultural colleges of Iowa and North Dakota are calling the attention of farmers to the need for careful threshing or combining of barley to preserve the classification "Malting". No barley that contains than 5 percent skinned kernels can be classed as "Malting", and with malting barley now selling at terminal markets for about 20 cents a bushel more than feed barley of the same numerical grade the prevention of skinning is an important item.

The college agronomists suggest that care in threshing or combining with correct adjustment of the machinery will prevent skinning. They also point out that barley should not be harvested "on the green side" but should be fully matured if it is to be classified as Malting. The windrower allows earlier harvesting than the combine. "Attention to barley during the critical stage of harvesting and threshing", they say, "will pay dividends to the producer in the form of higher returns through the sale of his grain as malting barley."

-oOo-

## ILLINOIS CATTLE FEEDERS

## ARE POOR "WEIGHT GUESSERS"

The College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois points out that many Illinois cattle feeders could profit by brushing up a bit on their ideas of cattle weights and values. On a recent LaSalle County cattle tour the opinions of 158 feeders showed a wide range of difference. Their guesses on weights of cattle varied as much as 290 pounds a head, and estimates of market values varied as much as \$4.50 a hundred pounds.

More than 20 of these tours have been arranged by the College this spring with a total attendance of 1,430 livestock feeders. Visits were made at 106 cattle feeding farms. Primarily intended to acquaint farmers with the best methods of fattening cattle, the tours have brought out important points dealing with marketing.

-oOo-

## MILK CONTROL INCREASES

## RETURNS TO N. Y. FARMERS

New York farmers are definitely assured of getting from 20 to 25 cents a hundredweight more for July milk than they would have received without the help of Federal and State control of prices, Cornell University reports. Higher retail prices are not expected to cut down the sales of fluid milk and cream appreciably but "eventually will encourage somewhat heavier production." One reason cited for the low milk prices since State and Federal control orders were suspended last spring is the lack of organized control of surplus milk. University economists say that if Federal and State control plans, including equalization, can be worked out satisfactorily during the next year or two, handling of surplus milk may tend to become concentrated again in the hands of a few organizations that can dispose of it more efficiently.



POULTRY CONGRESS EXHIBIT TO  
FEATURE N. J. EGG AUCTIONS

Organization and progress of what is claimed as the first cooperative egg and poultry auction in the United States will be shown in an exhibit at the World's Poultry Congress, July 28 to August 7, according to the New Jersey College of Agriculture. The exhibit intends to illustrate a sale of 80 cases of eggs in the basement of a Flemington dry goods store in 1930 as inaugurating the auction system of selling eggs and poultry. Early sales at the Flemington auction and its current operations will be portrayed to show its growth from a small beginning to a present membership of 2,500 farmers with annual sales close to \$1,500,000. New Jersey now has 5 cooperative auction markets with more than 5,500 members. During the past year these members sold more than \$3,750,000 worth of poultry and eggs over the auction block.

-oOo-

ANNOUNCE HEARINGS ON FRUIT  
AND VEGETABLE PACKAGE WEIGHTS

The California Department of Agriculture has called the attention of fruit and vegetable growers and shippers to Interstate Commerce Commission hearings being held this month at San Francisco and Los Angeles to discuss proposals by the rail carriers for upward revision of estimated weights of packages of fruits and vegetables. According to the Department, the proposals constitute a part of the railroads' battle of 5 years for higher estimated weights on California fruits and vegetables.

The first of the hearings was held in San Francisco, July 5. The second hearing will be held in the State Building, Los Angeles, July 17.

While a transportation rate increase is not involved, the Department points out that granting the railroad application would have the same force and effect. Data prepared for presentation at the hearings include records of the Federal-State Market News Service relating to prices paid for California fruit at eastern auction markets in recent years, bearing and nonbearing acreages, and other information of a similar nature.

-oOo-

BULK ORANGE-LEMON SHIPMENTS  
FROM CALIFORNIA ARE ILLEGAL

Shipment of bulk oranges and lemons out of California is illegal according to the California Department of Agriculture. Under provisions of a recently enacted assembly bill all oranges and lemons shipped from the State must be packed throughout in closed containers, with the exception of fruit used by the Federal Government. If standard containers are not used, they must not contain more than 15 pounds of oranges or lemons. Bulk shipments within the State are not affected by the law.

-oOo-

World production of citrus fruits has expanded more than most other agricultural commodities during the past 20 years.

MORE ADEQUATE, UNIFORM STATISTICS  
SOUGHT ON CITY MILK CONSUMPTION

. . . . . By J. B. Shepard

The retail value of milk and cream sold under the direct supervision of State and City Boards of Health, Milk Control Boards, and other local regulatory agencies is probably more than a billion dollars annually. And yet, only meager information is available for arriving at a reasonable level of consumption expected in a given community.

This situation reflects in part the need for more adequate statistics on consumption of fluid milk and cream, a need that has become acute in recent years.

The need for such data is not restricted to local areas. Wholesale distribution of milk for city consumption totals about 25 million gallons annually and accounts for about a fourth of all milk produced. In addition about 7 billion gallons are sold annually by farmers directly to consumers in small towns and rural areas.

Because of the effect that increased or decreased consumption of milk has upon dairy product prices, dairy interests have long needed definite and immediate information on changes in city consumption. Also, they have needed statistics that would be comparable between cities and that would help in determining areas in which sales effort, improvement in quality, price concessions or other acts might result in expanded consumption.

To meet the general need, a special effort is being made by the Agricultural Marketing Service to obtain adequate figures on city milk consumption -- not only in the cities where statistical records are maintained, but in markets where less complete records are available.

At the present time, city Boards of Health that compile statistics on city receipts or sales are being called upon to supply records of consumption. Many of the returns are comparable with reports of previous years, and thus supply an indication of changes in city consumption of fluid milk and cream. Some of them are sufficiently informative that causes of fluctuations in consumption may be discerned.

To make milk consumption records for the various cities more readily comparable, plans are being made to work with health authorities and other agencies in developing suitable and uniform forms and methods of procedure for obtaining data that will provide a more accurate gauge of consumption in the urban areas. Of special interest may be the records from cities where local efforts to increase milk consumption have proved productive.

Uniform methods and forms will not only provide comparable records between cities but also will make possible direct comparisons with 1940 census enumerations and population. They would permit comparisons on a per capita basis and provide a foundation for studies of regional differences and of the various factors contributing to the relatively



large milk consumption in some cities and the relatively low level of consumption in others.

Included in the compilations will be records from city agencies other than Boards of Health. Information will be obtained from local milk consumption surveys by market milk administrators and others, and from various monthly records of classified milk sales as compiled by State Milk Control Boards and cooperative marketing agencies. In some States records of sales of milk and cream for fluid consumption are collected in connection with reports of dairy products manufactured. These also will be used, as will the records obtained by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Consumers' Counsel, the Public Health Service, and other public agencies.

The need of more adequate statistics by individual cities has become obvious recently because of the tendency toward closer control of quality accompanied by rising costs. In some areas higher retail costs appear to have lowered per capita consumption of fluid milk and cream in a way which may be related to the rapid increase in the per capita consumption of evaporated milk. In other areas, lax enforcement of regulations and the low quality of milk offered for sale appear to affect consumption adversely.

Obviously the problem of Boards of Health is not only to protect the quality of the milk supply but to do this without so increasing the cost that important groups of the population are unable to purchase an adequate supply. To measure the effects of their regulations upon consumption, an increasing number of cities now desire to make periodic checks of changes in per capita consumption.

Maintaining city milk consumption at a reasonable level is a problem of primary importance -- not only to the very large numbers of farmers who sell market milk but to health authorities who see in increased consumption greater protection from malnutrition and disease.

In 1940 the new census will enumerate city populations, milk cows, and milk production. With this statistical foundation in the offing it appears a logical time for all agencies interested in milk consumption to cooperate in obtaining more complete statistics. The initial interest of the Agricultural Marketing Service is in trying out and developing improved methods of recording and compiling these statistics, and encouraging interested agencies in using these methods.

The next job will be to relate the statistics with estimates for areas from which figures are not available. This will be necessary to show the national situation. The complete picture, carried along from year to year, will provide much information upon which producers and handlers can base action for improving the market situation for fluid milk and cream.

(Note: Mr. Shepard is senior agricultural statistician with the Agricultural Marketing Service. His work deals largely with milk production and consumption statistics.)



LIVESTOCK MARKETING CHANGES ALTER  
MARKET NEWS REPORTING METHODS

. . . . . By W. O. Fraser

Livestock marketing practices have changed greatly in recent years. This has necessitated a number of changes in methods of assembling and disseminating daily market news information.

Two of the most significant changes have been the decentralization of marketing and the increase in the percentage of livestock that is hauled direct to market by truck.

Within the past 10 years livestock marketing has "decentralized". More than half of the hogs and from one-quarter to more than one-third of the cattle, calves, sheep and lambs are now purchased for slaughter at other than public markets. Obviously, it has become necessary to include market information on livestock sold direct as well as at public markets if market reports are to fully serve the needs of all farmers, particularly those who prefer to market their livestock direct.

During the past decade the truck has emerged as a principal mode of transporting livestock to market. Not only has it become a factor in handling direct shipments but it has served to handle an increasing proportion of the livestock going to public yards. From small proportions truck transport of livestock has grown to account for nearly 60 percent of the market receipts of cattle, 65 percent of the calves, more than 70 percent of the hogs, and slightly more than 30 percent of the sheep and lambs received at the public markets.

This shift from rail to truck transportation has an important bearing upon market news. Rail receipts are comparatively easy to estimate. The day's rail arrivals can be estimated as early as 6 a.m. And a mid-morning report on the number of cars loaded and ordered to load provides a good indication of the number of rail shipments that will be received at the market the next morning. But only a small percentage of the day's truck arrivals has been unloaded by 6 a.m. Furthermore, no definite information is available as to when later trucks may arrive or what they will unload when they do arrive. Hence there is no dependable way of estimating arrivals nearly a day in advance as heretofore.

The lateness of truck arrivals has been reflected in a tendency among both buyers and sellers to delay trading, to wait until a large percentage of the day's receipts has been delivered at the yards. The delay is increased by the large number of mixed loads in truck shipments -- loads which must be sorted before they can be offered for sale. These conditions and circumstances delay establishment of the day's market.

But producers and other traders want early information on receipts and prices. This is particularly true of those who sell and buy at country points rather than at primary public markets. How to meet this need has become a problem discussed recently at a meeting of representatives of the principal livestock reporting offices of the Agricultural Marketing Service.



The conference group, meeting in Kansas City in mid-June, recommended that market news coverage be extended to decentralized markets just as rapidly as funds and facilities may permit. It was the consensus of the group that market reports can be made of greater value by depicting market prices as specifically as possible, particularly for farmers who depend upon their own ability to sell their livestock at decentralized markets. To do this the group recommended the generous use of class and grade terms, accompanied by additional information as to origin and other characteristics that will help producers interpret market prices in terms of their own livestock.

Though market and price information is needed at an early hour, early reports may be misleading unless restricted to actual sales and to bids and asking prices that are specifically indicative of a definite price basis. It was decided, therefore, that market news releases filed prior to the establishment of a basis of trading should be confined to receipts and information of a general nature.

Arrangements already have been made to supplement daily receipt data -- the value of which has been materially diminished -- with weekly releases showing federally inspected slaughter by regions. These reports will cover more than 65 percent of the federally inspected slaughter of each species of livestock. Also, reports of feeder livestock moving through public stockyards are to be supplemented with reports of the numbers of "directs" moving into each principal feeding area.

These accomplishments, however, fail to effect any material improvement in the accuracy of either the 6 a.m. estimates of the day's receipts or the advance estimates of the following day's receipts. Toward the solution of this problem, a detailed study of methods of estimating receipts is to be made with particular reference to the advance estimates. The objective of the study is to determine some way of improving methods now employed in making advance estimates and to ascertain the value of the advance estimates in equalizing livestock receipts and in stabilizing prices.

Note:- Mr. Fraser, principal marketing specialist with the Agricultural Marketing Service, is in charge of standardization work on livestock and meats.)

-oOo-

#### BEAN-SOYBEAN INSPECTIONS

##### REACH NEW RECORD IN 1939

A new record for Federal inspections of dry edible beans and soybeans was set during the fiscal year 1939, the Agricultural Marketing Service reports. With an aggregate number of approximately 33,000 inspections during the 12-month period, the total was one-third larger than in any previous year and four times the number reported for 1935. Though much of this increase is attributed to the record crop of soybeans produced in 1938, much of it was due to the wider use of official U. S. standards in the marketing of dry edible beans. Inspections of soybeans for export during the past year exceeded those of any other year of record.



## INNOVATIONS IN CROP REPORTING

- By C. F. Sarle -

The pre-harvest wheat survey, started this year in the winter and spring Wheat Belts of the western Great Plains region, has aroused considerable interest in methods of arriving at official estimates of acreage, condition, and production of farm crops. Various means are used to supplement and check the reports supplied by the thousands of voluntary, unpaid crop reporters, located in every agricultural county in the United States.

Crop and livestock reporting is the oldest continuous activity of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The first general report was issued in 1863. Though this service, to farmers, shippers, dealers, and business men the country over, is more than 75 years old, new approaches to the many problems in forecasting are constantly being tried out in order to improve the accuracy of the reporting.

It was but a few years ago when the Federal-State agricultural statistician had only the railroad train as his source of contact with areas of production and from which to observe the condition of growing crops. He went by train to some town in the heart of an important wheat or cotton-growing area, and by horse-drawn vehicle or on foot he would inspect the growing crops. In the early 1920's these efforts were supplemented by counting -- from train windows -- the telegraph poles along the frontage of each field facing the railroad right-of-way.

Now the agricultural statistician can inspect the important producing areas for any given crop in his State by automobile. He can stop to check representative fields, to make careful observation of growing plants, filling heads of grain, or bursting bolls of cotton. As he travels he makes use of a "crop meter" attached to the speedometer cable of his car. In the Cotton Belt, he includes counts and measurements of cotton bolls in representative fields. In the Corn Belt, he counts and measures ears of corn. And he "cruises" through representative orchards.

The crop meter was first used in 1926. This ingenious mechanism has provided a valuable method of measuring acreage changes from year to year. The advantage of this method is that it is free of individual bias. The crop meter is attached to an automobile and replaces the regular speedometer drive. It has a double row of dials or buttons, one for each side of the road. When these buttons are punched they record the number of feet of each crop along the road traversed by the automobile. By covering the same routes year after year a direct comparison of the number of feet of frontage of each crop is obtained and ratios to total mileage compiled. The crop meter is particularly valuable in areas of intensive production of individual crops.

In the Great Plains States a program of making soil moisture tests has been started, particularly in Nebraska and Kansas. Representative fields over a wide territory are tested in the fall and spring by means of soil tubes. Soil moisture has been found closely correlated with yields in much of the Great Plains territory.



Cotton boll counts were started a few years ago. Fifteen-foot strips in representative fields are measured and counts are made of the number of plants, mature bolls, immature bolls, squares, and blooms, as well as of the number of squares and bolls punctured by the weevil. Two counts are made each year, one in August and one in September. The average size of sample lots of bolls is also measured by means of boll meters by which the volume of the bolls can be determined. These counts were started about 10 years ago but only recently have the data covered a sufficient period to make it possible to use the results in the current forecasts of cotton yields.

Similar work has been started on corn, the plants and ears being counted on a measured distance in representative fields. The length and size of ears selected at random are also measured. It is still too early to determine whether information collected can be used in current forecasting but the results so far are promising.

The latest innovation in Government crop reporting is the pre-harvest wheat survey, started this summer in the winter and spring wheat areas in the western Great Plains region. The immediate purpose of the survey is to obtain reliable information as to the quality of the new crop before very much of it has left the hands of producers.

In conducting the survey, three field crews started on June 1 in southwestern Oklahoma. These crews have worked northward just ahead of the harvest and began sampling activities in Nebraska during the early part of July. Laying out their routes to form grid-like patterns across each county, the crews obtain head samples from an area approximately 1/5000th of an acre some 2 to 5 days ahead of harvest. Selection of the fields to be sampled is based entirely upon the readings of the crop meters which accurately measure the total road frontage of the land area and the frontage planted to wheat along these routes.

Measurements include drill widths and heights of the wheat plants in the units from which samples are taken. This data and information as to the location of fields, lodging, hail damage, disease, and other factors affecting yield and quality are recorded in an envelope into which an individual sample of wheat is placed. In the laboratory at the Kansas State Agricultural College at Manhattan, chemical and other determinations are made and the test weight, protein content, and class determined.

In addition to supplying current information on quality, it is hoped the measurements of yields per acre will be helpful in estimating 1939 yields and production. In the study of relationship of such plant characteristics as height of plant, number of heads, and length of heads to yield per acre it is possible that an objective method may be developed whereby yields may be forecast as soon as the crop is fully headed.

New formulas for considering the effects of weather, soil moisture, and other factors which may be expected to affect crop yields are being perfected. Within the past 2 years, with the assistance of special research funds, studies to determine the effect of weather upon crop growth and production were inaugurated at several experiment stations. Agricultural Conservation Program reports are used in preparing acreage estimates.



But with all of these improvements and new devices for measuring acreage and estimating plantings and production, the more than 200,000 voluntary farm reporters remain the backbone of the Department's crop reporting service. These reporters serve in normal times and in times of catastrophe when special reports are needed. They continue as the immediately available source from which the Department can obtain either individual or composite pictures of acreages, crop conditions, and production prospects.

(Note:- Dr. Sarle, principal economist with the AMS, is in charge of basic research on agricultural statistics.)

-oOo-

#### SEVEN COMMODITIES ADDED TO SURPLUS FOODS LIST

Rice, cabbage, fresh peaches, fresh tomatoes, fresh green peas, and onions (except green onions) have been officially designated by the Secretary of Agriculture as surplus foods which, effective July 16, may be obtained with blue food order stamps. The addition of fresh pears to the list will be effective August 1. Oranges and grapefruit, which are on the current surplus list, will be removed on July 16.

Other commodities on the current list, which was announced in May, will continue to be available after July 16. They include butter, shell eggs, corn meal, dried prunes, dry edible beans, and wheat and whole wheat flour. The Food Stamp Plan is now in operation in Rochester, N.Y.; Dayton, Ohio; Seattle, Wash, and Birmingham, Ala. Eligible families in these cities may use the blue stamps to obtain any of the officially designated surplus foods.

-oOo-

#### CALIFORNIA TO INSPECT GRAPES FOR "SWEETNESS"

To the end that consumers of California grapes shall have grapes that are sweet enough to satisfy anyone from the very beginning of the season, the California Department of Agriculture is cooperating with county agricultural commissioners in a special inspection service for this year's grape crop. Inspections of early Thompson Seedless and Ribiers will be checked in the Imperial Valley and Coachella Valley to assure that the grapes comply with the maturity and sugar content requirements of the law. Grapes testing below the required percentage of sugar will be rejected and cannot be sold. Later the special supervision of grape inspections will be extended to the San Joaquin Valley.

-oOo-

TENTATIVE U.S. STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF FROZEN PEAS have been published in mimeographed form by the Agricultural Marketing Service. The tentative grades, which became effective May 25, 1939, are published with instructions for ascertaining the rating of each factor having to do with grade determination.

WHY PRICES ARE BELOW PRE-WAR;  
OTHER ARTICLES IN "SITUATION"

Why are farmers getting lower than pre-war prices for their products? F. L. Thomsen gives some of the principal reasons in an article in the July issue of "The Agricultural Situation." Dr. Thomsen says that "the foreign demand for a number of important commodities, particularly grains and cotton, has been reduced. We can now sell a smaller quantity of these commodities abroad at any given price, or we can obtain only a lower price for a given quantity." The reduced foreign demand is attributed to increases in foreign production and to the fact that "we have not learned that international trade necessitates a two-way flow of goods."

As to products which are consumed almost entirely in the domestic market, Dr. Thomsen points, among other things, to increased costs of distribution. He says that "although consumers in this country are able to and do pay considerably more for farm products than before the war, they demand more services in connection with the processing and handling of the commodities. This, together with higher wage rates and other middlemen's costs, has considerably increased the total handling charges involved in marketing farm products. The farmer gets what is left."

Other articles of interest in the July issue are "A Plan for Cotton-Crop Insurance", by R. T. Baggett, "A World of Citrus", by Gustave Burmeister, "Greater Uses for Dairy Products", by E. O. Whittier, "Livestock Estimates - An Appraisal", by C. E. Sarle, "Tobacco Inspection for 1939", by C. E. Gage, "Cotton Classing and Market News", by W. B. Lanham, "Broilers the Year Round", by J. H. Radabaugh, and "Industrial Recovery Resumed", by P. H. Bollinger. "The Agricultural Situation" is issued monthly by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

-oOo-

STATE LEGISLATURES KILL  
TRADE BARRIER BILLS

Interstate trade barrier bills were rejected by a dozen or more State legislatures in their 1939 sessions, says the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Existing barriers were lowered or repealed in some States. Few States enacted new trade barriers legislation.

Bureau officials declare that this 1939 legislative record is "the best in many years." They point out that hundreds of barrier laws are still on the books, but that "the record of the past year indicates that there has been a halt in the alarming growth of interstate trade interference." The hope is expressed that in 1941, when most State legislatures meet again, many of the worst barriers will be removed.

Investigations by the Bureau during the last 2 years revealed a "maze" of internal barriers erected by the States. Restrictions of all sorts - State and municipal - were found to be "limiting distribution and raising costs" on practically every food product - milk, butter, eggs, poultry, meats, fruits, and vegetables.